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## ASPIRA ranked in Top 10 Charities

In its 1998 Forecast issue, *Money Magazine* reported that the ASPIRA Association, Inc. was one of the top ten charities in the nation in effectively using the funds it raises to provide programs and services. The article, which appeared in a special December issue under the heading "Smart Giving," detailed an American Institute of Philanthropy (AIP) *Rating Guide and Watchdog Report* which rates the effectiveness of nonprofits in spending donated money. The AIP gave ASPIRA an A+ rating, noting that ASPIRA spends 90% of its funds on charitable purposes and only 2% of its funds to raise money.

"It is quite an honor to receive such high ratings from an organiza-

tion such as AIP. Many people who donate to charities are concerned that too much of their money will be used for fund-raising or administration. ASPIRA is very confident of its effectiveness in delivering quality services to Latino youth and makes a great effort to ensure that the funds it receives go directly into our programs and services. This rating confirms that giving to ASPIRA is a solid investment in our youth," said Ronald Blackburn-Moreno, President of the ASPIRA Association.

The AIP report looked at the percentage of funds spent on charitable purposes and on raising funds, as well as years of available assets. According to the article in

*Money*, the report "considers the entire cost of direct mail a fundraising expense, even though charities can count some of program cost ... and ... assigns big fat A's to F's based on three financial measures—program spending, fundraising efficiency, and size of reserves." ASPIRA was ranked as an "A+ charity" along with such nonprofits as the International Rescue Committee, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Asia Foundation, and Reading is Fundamental.

## Association develops Strategic Plan to 2003

After nearly two years of Association-wide analysis and discussion, ASPIRA has developed its first strategic plan for the entire ASPIRA Association. The plan outlines six major areas to be developed over the next five years:

1. Development of a new entrepreneurial leadership initiative in the Puerto Rican and Latino community—youth entrepreneurship and organizational self-sufficiency;
2. Establishment/expansion and strengthening of ASPIRA's schools/educational institutions;
3. Development of ASPIRA Alumni Associations;

*cont. on page 4*



Thirteen-year old Ana Gaitan of Miami won the ASPIRA 1997 National Conference student art contest with her color pencil drawing depicting "Community." More conference news is featured on pages 6-7.

**President's  
Corner**

The opponents of bilingual education would have us believe that this is all about education and what's best for children and the country's future. The Unz initiative to abolish bilingual education in California is the latest example. It's amazing how suddenly businessmen, politicians, and professionals are so knowledgeably citing the education research that proves—they would have us believe—that bilingual education doesn't work, and are proposing all kinds of absurd alternatives, shrouded in education jargon such as "structured immersion," whatever that means. They even deny that retaining a native language has inherent benefits because, they say, the research *shows* (of course anyone can twist research to serve their own purposes) that instruction in another language only retards the acquisition of English. In fact, they have been so effective in using this rhetoric that they've led proponents of bilingual education straight into the trap of defending it on grounds that it is a sound educational strategy that allows children to get an education while they learn English. They've even convinced some Hispanic parents that this is really about the education and the future of their children and the country.

The debate over bilingual education is not about education research, education, teaching, or schools. It has to do with education about as much as the struggle for desegregation and the "separate but equal" doctrine were education issues. This is about race, ethnicity, and class. It is about equality and civil rights. Moreover, it is not really about Asians, or Central Europeans, or Russian immigrants, but about Hispanics. It is about the right of *all* children, including Hispanics, to have access to an equal education and about not letting schools become instruments for stripping our children of their native language and culture under the guise of assimilation. If this were really about education, if it were truly about what's best for children, it would be resolved by parents and educators in the classroom, not

## Bilingual Education: What is this debate about?

by politicians and wealthy businessmen pushing a political agenda, as in the case of Unz and similar movements in other states. Bilingual education just follows affirmative action as the latest target of some people who are promoting the anti-immigrant movement, who oppose affirmative action, and who are pushing for English only. Unfortunately, now the attack is against our children.

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*The debate over bilingual education has to do with education about as much as the struggle for desegregation and the "separate but equal" doctrine were education issues.*

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If this were really a debate over how best to educate our children, and there were a better alternative, I would be the first to embrace it. Many bilingual education programs do, in fact, fail Hispanic children. Many were set up to fail in the first place, with little commitment by schools, few teachers, and few resources. But opponents of bilingual education haven't come up with a single educationally sound alternative. They don't want one. Let us not fool ourselves into believing that this is about education. For us, for Hispanics, the issue must be how to make sure that *our* children get the same education as any other child.

Bilingual education was born of the political and legal battles that ended up in the courts and in federal civil rights law—in the 1964 Civil Rights Act, in the 1974 *Lao v. Nichols* decision, and in the 1974 ASPIRA of New York *Consent Decree*, all of which are still in force. It was formalized as a national program through the same federal legislation that provides special help for poor children to level the playing field: the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1964.

In *Lao* and in the *ASPIRA Consent Decree*, the courts agreed that to deny instruction in their native language to children who had not mastered English was to deny them an equal education. It is a violation of their civil rights. The evidence then was compelling, as it is today. Attempts like the Unz initiative to turn back the clock, to deny Hispanics an equal education, will lead us right back to the courts and the streets.

## New directors for two ASPIRAs

Two ASPIRA Associate offices are benefitting from the energy and vision brought by new leadership.

ASPIRA of Illinois has chosen José Rodriguez as its new Executive Director, tapping into a tradition of service to the organization. Rodriguez has worked for ASPIRA of Illinois since 1990, most recently serving as Acting Executive Director. His immediate goals for his tenure are to move ASPIRA of Illinois into the next century by diversifying the variety of its services, increasing its use of technology, promoting corporate partnerships, serving other Latino populations in the state, and establishing both a technical college and a credit union.

ASPIRA of New Jersey is also under new leadership, as William Colón takes over as Executive Director. He brings "a wealth of experience and community service," according to Noemi Velázquez, Board Chairperson.

## Parent program recognized, growing

The ASPIRA Parents for Educational Excellence Program (APEX) recently expanded to ASPIRA of Florida and ASPIRA of Connecticut. With a \$600,000 grant from the DeWitt-Wallace Readers' Digest Fund, the APEX program now operates at all seven ASPIRA Associate sites. The award-winning parent involvement model was developed by ASPIRA of Illinois and ASPIRA of Pennsylvania. Last year, it was expanded to ASPIRA of New Jersey, ASPIRA of New York, and ASPIRA of Puerto Rico. APEX provides over 80 parents per year at each site with a series of formal workshops on assisting their children in school, being advocates for their children and promoting education reform in schools and school districts. It uses a "train-the-trainer" model whereby parents who graduate from the program train other parents. Over 1,200 parents have graduated since its inception in 1992.

APEX continues to be recognized as a national model for

parental involvement. It was most recently featured in the November, 1997 issue of *Latina* magazine.

A typical activity for APEX is the community forum held at ASPIRA of Illinois that focused on the impact on children of legislative changes to immigration and welfare laws. This forum was attended by both U.S. Congressman Luis Gutiérrez and State Senator Miguel Del Valle.

Illinois APEX coordinator Elsa Anaya reports that after completing APEX training, parents have become more active in their Local School Councils and in other community groups. Parent participation increased from almost nothing to a very reasonable group, especially in the Bilingual Education and Chapter 1 committees, and the PTA. In addition, 58 parents have organized a very successful Parents Federation Group.

*For more information on the APEX program, contact Ms. Christa Stephens, Program Manager, at 202-835-3600 ext. 117.*

## Scholarship honors Connecticut founder



Alfred Carrion created an original art print of Batalla for the event.

ASPIRA of Connecticut held its first annual "César Batalla Way" in October to honor the memory of one of its founders with a scholarship fund for outstanding Aspirantes.

César Batalla, a founder and chairperson of the Connecticut office, was widely respected in the Bridgeport community for his decades of public service. Born in Caguas, Puerto Rico, in 1945, he died of leukemia in June of 1996.

"When César passed away, a lot of community leaders wanted to express the impact he had on their lives," said Carolyn González, coordinator of the scholarship fundraising event. "His family determined that there should be a scholarship to remember his many accomplishments and his dedication to the community."

Over 200 people attended the event, with thousands of dollars raised for scholarships.

## Pennsylvania hosts two 27th Annual Conferences

Over a decade before current Aspirantes were born, students from Pennsylvania ASPIRA Clubs came together for their first Leadership Conference and organized their first College Conference. Today's Aspirantes recently continued the tradition.

Nov. 23-25, forty high school student leaders from six high schools in Philadelphia participated in the ASPIRA Club Federation's (A.C.F.) Leadership Conference. The Conference offers newly elected officers an opportunity to learn and grow as aspiring leaders of their community. The students participated in workshops focused on team building, communications, personal development, and organizing. They also elected A.C.F. officers for the 1997-1998 school year. Congratulations to President Arlene López (Franklin Learning Center), Vice President Katie Rendón (Bodine HS), Secretary Marie Acevedo (Bodine HS), and Treasurer Jessica Velázquez (Masbaum HS).

Two weeks later, on Dec. 5, over 500 students attended the 27th Annual College Conference. The event allowed students to speak directly with forty college representatives about the benefits of their schools. In addition, Aspirantes could speak with college students of color and get their first hand opinion of collegiate life.

## Strategic Plan developed, cont. from page 1

4. Development of a new initiative in strategic communications, positioning, visibility, and communications technology;
5. Organizational development through professional development, systems enhancement, and technology; and
6. Assurance of increased funding and financial stability.

These major initiatives and the strengthening of current programs—

especially of core programs such as public policy leadership development and the ASPIRA Clubs, counseling, academic programs, family involvement, and advocacy—will provide a solid foundation to take ASPIRA into the 21st century and beyond.

"We believe this is a historic accomplishment for ASPIRA," said Ronald Blackburn-Moreno, President of the ASPIRA Association.

## ASPIRA Issues Puerto Rico Status Paper

What are the prospects for change in Puerto Rico? Is commonwealth an acceptable final solution to the status question? Should Puerto Ricans on the mainland have the right to vote in a plebiscite that would define Puerto Rico's future? These are some of the questions addressed by ASPIRA in its latest Policy Brief on the history of Puerto Rico's political status. They are also the main issues surrounding the currently proposed *United States and Puerto Rico Political Relations Act*, known as the "Young Bill."

"ASPIRA does not usually deal with strictly political issues," said Ronald Blackburn-Moreno, President of ASPIRA. "However, because of the critical importance of Puerto Rico's political status and the controversy produced in the Puerto Rican community, both in Puerto Rico and on the mainland, by the Young Bill being considered in Congress, we felt an obligation to inform our community by presenting the facts as objectively as possible."

ASPIRA commissioned the Policy Brief. *The United States and*

*Puerto Rico Political Relations Act: Background, Issues and Principles*, to prominent political scientist and commentator Dr. José Gariga-Picó, professor at the University of Puerto Rico. The paper describes the constitutional and political history of the status of Puerto Rico since the United States claimed sovereignty over the Island after the Spanish American War in 1898. It also discusses the several attempts made over almost a century to resolve the status question, both in Puerto Rico and by the U.S. Congress, including the major issues raised by the "Young Bill," proposed by Congressman Don Young (R-Alaska).

The Policy Brief was distributed to all Members of Congress on key committees that will be considering the legislation, along with the documentary *Mi Puerto Rico* by producer and ASPIRA National Board Chairperson Raquel Ortiz.

*Single copies of the Policy Brief are available free from the ASPIRA Association. Send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the ASPIRA National Office.*

## ***Math and Science Academy expands***

The American Honda Foundation awarded ASPIRA a \$60,000 grant to expand the ASPIRA Mathematics and Science Academy (MAS) to ASPIRA of Florida's Accolade Middle School.

The MAS after-school enrichment program is designed to broaden interest and expand career horizons for Latinos in science, mathematics, and technology. Students in the program, which has been successfully implemented by

ASPIRA of Illinois, receive special instruction and activities after-school, on Saturdays, and during the summer to complement their school work. Activities include hands-on science and math activities, field trips, scientific research activities, and assistance with school work.

*For more information on the MAS Academy, contact Mr. Al Staropoli, Program Manager, at 202-835-3600 ext. 137.*

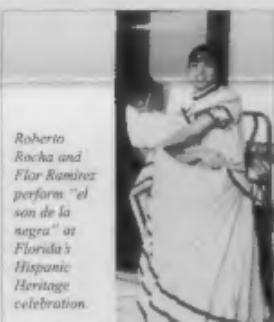
## ***ASPIRA of Florida divisions stay active***

### ***Heritage fest at ASPIRA South***

ASPIRA of Florida's South division held its third annual Hispanic Heritage celebration in November. Aspirantes practiced for weeks to master the dances, plays, and speeches that they performed for peers, teachers, parents, and community members. The Hispanic Heritage Celebration is one of the Aspirantes' most anticipated events, allowing them to learn about and express traditions of their native cultures.

### ***ASPIRA Palm Beach recognized as leader***

In September 1997, 200 Aspirantes, parents, and community leaders rallied together in a public meeting regarding a boundary change that would have bused 403 predominately Hispanic youth outside their community. As a result of the Hispanic community's mobilization efforts, the school district voted for no change to the school boundaries and ASPIRA



*Roberto Rocha and Flor Ramirez perform "el son de la negra" at Florida's Hispanic Heritage celebration.*

received an appointment to the Boundary Committee.

ASPIRA Palm Beach was the recipient of the 1998 Truinfo award for nonprofits, and Palm Beach ACF President Karinna Ambrossi received the Youth Truinfo award, presented by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Palm Beach County and the Hispanic Bar Association of Palm Beach County.

## ***Pennsylvania wins 1st Latino charter school***

After many struggles, ASPIRA of Pennsylvania was awarded the state's first Latino charter school by the Philadelphia School Board. The Eugenio Maria de Hostos Bilingual Charter School opens its doors next fall to 120 fourth, fifth, and sixth graders, with eventual expansion to grades seven and eight.

"For the first time in the more than one hundred years that Latinos have lived in this city there will be a bilingual school that will be for the community and run by the community," noted the newspaper *Community Focus*, heralding the event.

Ninety percent of the students will come from the immediate North Philadelphia neighborhood, with the rest drawn through an open lottery. Its educational philosophy stems from educators Paulo Freire and John Dewey, who saw schools not as isolated institutions but as agents for social change.

In addition to high academic standards, the school's attention to cultural pride will range from instruction in history and music to guayabera uniforms and Caribbean/African food in the cafeteria.

### ***Greater Miami and the Beaches build leadership skills***

November brought the annual College Fair to the Miami/Beaches clubs, while December marked their Congressional Convention. Student representatives elected their ASPIRA Club Federation Executive Committee Officers, who this year are led by Diego Cabrera of Carol City Senior and Martha Fernández of Miami Beach Senior high schools.

## 1997 ASPIRA National Conference:

*ASPIRA's 1997 National Conference, Empowering Communities through Entrepreneurship and Technology, brought over 200 students together with several hundred entrepreneurial leaders and technology experts to discuss the development of entrepreneurial leadership that will carry Latino youth successfully into the 21st century. A few of the one hundred entrepreneurs, educators, and experts speaking at the October event are excerpted below.*



*After a stirring speech and a standing ovation, Sydney Valerio poses with Dr. Antonia Pantoja, founder of ASPIRA, as she accepts her award for best student essay.*

### New York Aspirante Sydney Valerio

Sydney Valerio, a student at DeWitt Clinton High School in New York City, shared the stage with ASPIRA founder and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Dr. Antonia Pantoja when she delivered a speech entitled *The Entrepreneurship Movement and the Role of Technology*.

"By the year 2000 the domain of our success in society will involve technology," Valerio noted. "Technology will dominate the employment sector, ways of living, and will determine if success will be reached by

our society. Therefore, we as Latinos must prepare ourselves for what the future has in store for us. By educating ourselves about how economic development will be achieved by our society, we can then develop the skills needed in order to face a society that is dominated by technology. Entrepreneurship is the skill of organizing and managing a commercial venture, especially one that involves the taking of risks. If we want to take the risks, we have to be united and educated. In other words, we have to educate ourselves and our society on what entrepreneurship involves and how it can help us."

Valerio concluded with a call to action: "If we want to create a better tomorrow for generations to enjoy, change must come today. UNITE, get an education, and use all of our knowledge and power to overcome all of the obstacles that are placed in our way. Success will then follow."

### SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez

Aida Alvarez, an Aspirante who currently serves in the Clinton administration as the senior executive at the Small Business Administration, was one of four keynote speakers at the Conference. Others were John Lopez, President and CEO of Lopez Foods, Richard Gephardt (D-MO), the U.S. House of Representatives Minority Leader, Xavier Becerra (D-CA), Chairman of the



*Aida Alvarez is a model of the ASPIRA vision of entrepreneurship for community development.*

## A new look at entrepreneurship

Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and Dr. Hugo Patiño, Vice President for Research and Development at Coors Brewing Company.

Aida Alvarez spoke of ASPIRA's legacy of entrepreneurship. "As Administrator of the SBA, I believe strongly in the promise that entrepreneurship holds for the next generation. History shows that a thriving small business community leads to job creation, economic self-sufficiency, thriving community, and strong democracy. It is no coincidence that Dr. Pantoja, who founded ASPIRA, has concluded that small business is essential to sustain and develop a strong community. She is working with the SBA to rebuild a community in

*"ASPIRA opens the door to a world of possibilities. It has served as a mentor to thousands of young Latinos, and as a catalyst for the success of the Hispanic community as a whole."*

*—Aida Alvarez*

*House minority leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO) discusses entrepreneurship with ASPIRA President Ronald Blackburn-Moreno after his conference address.*



natural Puerto Rico, where small business development leads to fighting against poverty, joblessness, and dependency."

"Dr. Pantoja is a legend," she asserted. "We Aspirantes are her legacy. It is our duty and our privilege to serve as a bridge to the next generation of Hispanic leadership. Our challenge now is to find ways to inspire a new generation and to expose them to the culture of entrepreneurship."

### Pennsylvania Aspirante Thaymee Mercado

Thaymee Mercado, a senior in high school, was a student representative from ASPIRA of Pennsylvania at the conference. She used her own experiences campaigning for elected positions both at her school and in ASPIRA to discuss the importance of self-confidence.

"At the student caucus, one of the most important topics we spoke about dealt with the importance of building up our self-confidence. What is meant by self-confidence?"

"Self-confidence is believing in yourself and who you are, where you come from and where you are going. It is understanding your history, realizing your potential contributions, and most importantly, having a vision for yourself and your community. It is about communicating with others and establishing social relationships. It is about building a community. Self-confidence is about challenging yourself."



*Florida Aspirante Francisco Tavera addresses the student caucus of the National Conference. Tavera also gave a speech offering "Useful advice in order to achieve success as an entrepreneur or in life."*

## Federal Notes

### *President Clinton Unveils Urban Education Initiative*

A new urban education initiative was announced by President Clinton in his State of the Union address in January. While the President mentioned few details in his speech, the new initiative proposes to provide \$22 billion in interest-free bonds for school construction, half of which would be targeted to school districts that have large numbers of low-income students. The President also announced that he was proposing to reduce class size to 18 students in grades 1-3. In his budget proposal, the President is including \$12.4 billion over seven years to reduce class size that would be distributed directly to states under Title I Compensatory Education of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The President also proposed an undisclosed amount to promote quality teaching in high poverty areas by providing additional funding for the recruitment and preparation of new teachers through partnerships between school districts and higher education institutions.

Finally, the President's education initiative will include "Educational Opportunity Zones," a new program that would provide \$1.5 billion in grants over five years, on a competitive basis, to 50 school districts that are in high poverty areas. The grants would focus on raising student achievement and teacher professional development, with strong accountability measures attached.

The President's Urban Education Initiative was spurred by a coalition of national education organizations, led by the Council of the Great City Schools, that wrote a letter to the President in January outlining an "Urban Education Agenda." ASPIRA, along with organizations such as the Urban League, the National Education Association, the Urban Coalition, the Rainbow Coalition, and the Institute for Educational Leadership, joined in this broad-based coalition to propose major initiatives to improve urban education. Over half of all low-income students, and over two-thirds of minority children, are in urban schools and fair the worst among the country's school children.

### *Hispanic Education Initiative Announced by White House*

After almost two years of work and negotiations with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the White House announced a major Hispanic Education Initiative to be included in the President's Fiscal 1999 budget. Several national Latino organizations, including ASPIRA, collaborated closely with the Caucus and with Congressman Rubén Hinojosa to define and propose initiatives that would target federal funding to the education of Latino students.

The Hispanic Education Initiative proposes to significantly increase funding for existing programs, especially under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Higher Education Act, and to target funding to areas with high concentrations of Hispanic low-income students. Chief among concerns of the Initiative shapers is the exceedingly high dropout rate among Hispanic students nation-wide. Among other proposals, this new initiative includes:

- a 25% increase in funding under Comprehensive School Reform targeted to areas with high drop-out rates;
- a \$33 million increase in Bilingual Education, to include new funding for teacher training;
- a \$53 million increase (10%) in TRIO program funding (Upward Bound, Talent Search, Educational Opportunity Centers and Special Services for Disadvantaged Students), including an additional \$40 million for Upward Bound early intervention programs for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders in high poverty areas;
- a 133% increase in funding for Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) under Title III of the Higher Education Act, to support the development of colleges and universities that have high concentrations of Hispanic students;
- a 16% increase in funding for Migrant Education;
- a 138% increase for the HEP-CAMP Program, which targets Hispanic students;
- \$5 million for a Youth Job Training Demonstration

*continued next page*

## *Hispanic Education, cont.*

Program under the Department of Labor for training of 14 and 15 year-olds; • \$20 million for model English as a Second Language Programs under Adult Education; and • a 5.3% increase in Title I Compensatory Education—the largest federal education program—to districts and schools with high concentrations of low-income students. Other non-budget proposals include improved coordination of efforts among federal agencies that administer education programs such as Head Start, establishing a Spanish-language 800 number to the Department of Education, and greater outreach by federal agencies to colleges and universities serving Hispanic students.

Funding for these initiatives, according to the White House, would come from projected surpluses in the national budget and from the proposed tobacco settlement. The initiatives are expected to be harshly contested by some members of Congress in the upcoming debates on the federal budget.

## **Strong opposition by African Americans to Hispanic Serving Institutions initiative**

Two of the major national African American higher education organizations, NAFEO and the United Negro College Fund, expressed strong opposition to an amendment to the Higher Education Act of 1964 to create a separate part under Title III specifically to fund Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs)—institutions with over 25% of Hispanic first generation students. Those who oppose the set-aside for HSIs, proposed by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and Congressman Rubén Hinojosa of Texas, contend that there are significant historical differences between Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and HSIs. HBCUs currently receive an average of \$1.1 million per non-competitive grant, while HSIs can receive up to \$350,000 on a competitive bid. HBCU supporters argue that in the anti-affirmative action environment in Congress, a program targeted to a specific ethnic group would be politically unwise and detrimental to HBCUs. HSI

supporters disagree.

"HSIs and the Hispanic higher education community have been struggling to create this program for years," said Ronald Blackburn-Moreno, President of ASPIRA. "HSIs enroll over 40% of Hispanic students in the U.S. It would be a shame if a fight among two minority groups—neither of which receives a fair share of funding under this Act—would once again prevent us from obtaining much needed funding for our institutions."

In a House Education Committee Meeting held on March 18-19, the Congressional Black and Hispanic Caucuses reached a compromise: HSI language would be moved to Title VIII while HBCU language remained under Title III. HSIs are requesting \$80 million for undergraduate support programs and \$20 million for graduate programs. For fiscal year 1999, President Clinton's budget request for HSIs is \$28 million and for HBCUs is \$159.5 million.

## **ASPIRA Co-Sponsors 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Pell Grants**

In January, ASPIRA co-sponsored with the College Board and several other national organizations a one day legislative seminar on Capitol Hill to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landmark legislation that provides grants to low-income students to attend college, the Pell

grants. Senator Claiborne Pell addressed the seminar, which included over 25 members of the U.S. House and Senate as featured speakers, as well as representatives from over 20 national education organizations.

The Pell grant program, one of the largest federal education programs, provides over \$6 billion each year in grants up to \$3,000 for college to nearly four million students.

## ASPIRA hands over NHLA Chairmanship

After two years chairing the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, Ronald Blackburn-Moreno, President of the ASPIRA Association, turned over the chair to Arturo Vargas, Executive Director of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials. At its annual meeting in November, the NHLA, a national coalition uniting the 30 major Latino organizations in the nation, elected Mr. Vargas unanimously to become its next Chairman.

"We at ASPIRA are very proud to have led this organization for two years and we are very grateful for the unfailing support of the many national Latino organizations that worked hard to make our successes possible," said Blackburn-Moreno. "Arturo is a highly capable and committed young leader in our community and I know he will do a wonderful job as NHLA Chairman. I wish him all the best and reiterate our commitment at ASPIRA to fully support him and the NHLA."

Blackburn-Moreno also detailed the significant accomplishments of the two years that ASPIRA led the NHLA. "With the full support of all the organizations, we have seen a group of Latino leaders come together in unity like never before to address important issues that affect every member of our community. We pushed hard, as a unified voice, to ensure increased appointments of Latinos to high positions in the federal government, and we issued a well-received Report

Card on the President's performance in appointing Latinos in his administration. Most importantly, we issued *Creating a Renaissance of Community and Culture for All by the Year 2000: An Hispanic Policy Agenda*, a blueprint to guide our community's development into the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

The NHLA office address is 514 C Street NE, Suite 704, Washington, DC 20002.

### **Coalition receives major grant for Latino youth leadership**

The National Coalition for Latino Leadership (NCLL) received a \$1.5 million three-year grant from the Kellogg Foundation to develop major initiatives in research and technical assistance to youth leadership programs that serve primarily Latino youth. The NCLL, launched three years ago with a grant from the Ford Foundation, brings together the main organizations involved in Latino youth leadership, including ASPIRA, the National Urban Fellows, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), and Casa Don Pedro. The grant will provide funding to conduct research on effective leadership development strategies, to disseminate information nationally on Latino youth leadership programs, and to provide direct

### **ASPIRA on grant- awarding board**

Ronald Blackburn-Moreno was elected to the Board of Directors of the Foundation for the Improvement of Education, a \$17 million foundation affiliated with the National Education Association (NEA), that awards grants to teachers and organizations to improve teaching across the country. Funded mainly through a \$1 per year contribution by each of the over 2.3 million NEA members, the Foundation awards over \$2 million per year in grants, including mini-grants to teachers. Other Foundation programs include Learning Tomorrow, which promotes technology, Road Ahead, and A Change of Course.

"We are very proud to support the Foundation and the NEA in this very worthwhile endeavor," said Blackburn-Moreno. "The NEA has been a long-time supporter of ASPIRA and we appreciate its interest in having a Latino voice on the Board of the Foundation."

Other prominent members of the Board of Directors include Bob Chase, President of the NEA, Mary H. Futrell, former NEA President and Dean of the Graduate School of Education at George Washington University, and Sharon Robinson, Senior Vice President at Educational Testing Service.

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assistance to organizations that are involved in youth leadership development in the Latino community.

*For more information on NCLL, contact Linda Saldivar at 602-839-2926.*

## NY/NJ sponsor joint health conference

On January 10, ASPIRA of New York and ASPIRA of New Jersey coordinated a Health Careers Conference which was sponsored by Cornell University Medical College and the Boricua/Latino Health Organization. In developing the conference theme, "Mobilizing and Linking Our Way into the Health Professions," conference

organizers Jorge Torres of New York and Miguel Rosa of New Jersey collectively envisioned a leading effort to significantly increase the representation of Puerto Rican/Latino health care professionals. The conference was well attended by high school and college students and health professionals from both New York and New Jersey.

## ASPIRA/Connecticut wins leadership grant

Alma Maya, Executive Director of ASPIRA of Connecticut, accepted a \$5,000 check to strengthen the economic and educational status of the Hispanic community in Connecticut from the Hispanic Radio Network at its first national conference in Washington, DC.

## Nonprofit Gateway Web Network introduced

The White House recently unveiled the US Nonprofit Gateway Web Network, a one-stop federal government internet site designed for the nonprofit community.

"The Nonprofit Gateway opens the door for nonprofit groups to more than 300,000 government web pages," said Vice President Al Gore at the unveiling ceremony. Its homepage has links to information on grants, budgets, employment, volunteer opportunities, agency agreements, and more. Each of the government departments has created its own local nonprofit homepage. The Gateway's homepage is at [www.nonprofit.gov](http://www.nonprofit.gov).

ASPIRA was selected after a nationwide radio program invited listeners to nominate a community organization for the award. All nominees were asked to submit a proposal, from which ASPIRA was chosen.

## Wildlife Federation seeks interns

The National Wildlife Federation, the nation's largest conservation education and advocacy organization, is seeking applicants for its Internship Program. Many of the internship opportunities provide an understanding of environmental injustices and direct exposure to the legislative process. Interns may work in the NWF core areas: Water Quality, Land Stewardship, Sustainable Communities, Endangered Habitat, and Wetlands. Most positions require college experience or a bachelor's degree.

For further information, contact Leevannah J. Washington, Internship Coordinator, NWF, 1400 16th Street, NW, Suite 501, Washington, DC 20036, or call 202-797-6655.

## Illinois plans gala

ASPIRA of Illinois is encouraging supporters to reserve September 26 on their calendars. That will be the date for Illinois' 30th anniversary gala event. More details will follow in upcoming newsletters, but it will be a big event, promise ASPIRA planners.

## Kellogg supports leadership training

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has awarded \$187,000 over three years to continue efforts of the ASPIRA Public Policy Leadership Program (APPLP) in Chicago, Miami, and New York. The goal of the APPLP is to develop students' leadership skills through public policy seminars and public service internships.

## Celebrating National Youth Service Day

**April 21**

ASPIRA has partnered with Youth Service America to celebrate the tenth anniversary of National Youth Service Day (NYSD), the largest service event in the United States. Each year, NYSD engages more than two million young volunteers in over nine million hours of community service. It promotes the benefits of service and volunteering to the American people.

We invite you to incorporate April 21st into your program plans. For more information, contact Omar Velarde-Wong at 202-296-2992, ext. 34, or visit SERVEnet's Website at [www.SERVEnet.org](http://www.SERVEnet.org).



## ASPIRA founder still builds bridges to young Aspirantes

Aspirantes received the following New Year's letter from ASPIRA founder Antonia Pantoja, originally published in ASPIRA of New York's *Areyto* Newsletter.

Dear Aspirantes:

During the last two years, I have had the good fortune of going to visit several of the ASPIRAS. It has been very gratifying to see the growth and the impressive new development that I have found. . . . I have decided to make it my business to visit all ASPIRA's this new 1998 year, because ASPIRA is inspiring! As many of you who were at the ASPIRA Association Conference this year heard me say, "I am entering an adventure with

ASPIRA Alumni to start an economic development project." As this will be a community development economic project, we Aspirantes will learn together how to get out of a life of dependency, learning together how to create wealth with our intelligence, skills, and ethical commitment. It will be exciting to do this together! I am looking forward to working with you in the future. My love to all and a HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Toni Pantoja

ASPIRA Association, Inc.  
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## National Office offers internships

The ASPIRA National Office will once again be hosting the Everett Public Service Internships for summer 1998. The internships are ten weeks long and offer opportunities in Public Policy Research, Education, Parent Leadership, and Youth Leadership and Community Service.

We are interested in students with any of the following qualifications: Spanish proficiency, excellent communication skills, ability to work with policy makers, interest in policy issues of importance to the Latino community, and familiarity with minority education issues.

Stipends are approximately \$175/week. Undergraduate and graduate students are encouraged to send a resume and cover letter indicating internship area of interest to Diane Wood, Manager, Youth Leadership and Community Service, at the ASPIRA National Office. Contact Ms. Wood at 202-835-3600, ext. 128 for details.